

## AMERICA IN FRANCE

## XIII—Tours

"Normandy is Normandy, Burgundy is Burgundy, Provence is Provence, but Touraine is essentially France." So wrote Henry James after a visit to Tours in 1882, when the Rue Nationale was still the Rue Royale, and when the statue of the most famous Touraine of modern times, perhaps of all time, Honoré de Balzac, had yet to be set up.

Touraine, however, did not, in the course of the centuries, develop its essential Frenchness without let or hindrance. The Saracens nearly reached it. The English did. The fair land was ravaged again and again in the Hundred Years War. Before that, in the 11th century, when the counts of Blois ruled Tours, there were many bitter struggles before Touraine was conquered and became a part of the domain of the house of Anjou until its union with the crown in the 13th century. Just now it is Ho. S.O.S.A.E.F. and as such it is known to the thousands of American soldiers who have passed through it.

Caesar mentions the Turones, and no more. It is known, however, that they were one of the Gallic tribes which inhabited the Loire valley somewhere in the vicinity of Tours of today. The first Tours was built on the hill across the river, where now stands the pleasant little suburb of St. Symphorien. It was the Romans who moved it across the river, and called their settlement Caesariodunum, or Caesar's Town.

**Christianized in Third Century**

The first citizen of Tours to make a place for himself in history was St. Gatianus, who preached Christianity there in the third century. As testimony to the fruit of his labors there now rise the two towers of the Cathedral of St. Etienne, begun between 1170 and 1175, on the site of an earlier building, and completed more than four centuries later. The work went so slowly that a proverb gained vogue, "As long as the job of St. Maurice," for the edifice was originally dedicated to the latter.

Even more famous was St. Martin, third bishop of Tours and converter of all Gaul to Christianity. Of the great basilica of St. Martin only two landmarks, the Tour de l'Horloge and the Tour Charlemagne, are now standing. The Tour Charlemagne was built in 810, when Charlemagne was crowned head of the Holy Roman Empire by Pope Leo III, to mark the site of the tomb of Luitgarde, the emperor's fourth wife. The massive basilica covered much of the ground between the present Rue des Halles and the river, that medley of old and new streets which is the oldest part of Tours.

Next to Balzac, probably the most famous personage whose name is linked with that of Tours—also one of the most sinister and diabolical figures in all French history—is Louis XI. Louis' chalet was at Plessis-Tours—this, the stronghold of Tours—about a kilometer from the city. An armed guard of 40 men was posted about its walls night and day; sentinels outside had orders to fire on any passerby at night; the woods roundabout were frequently populated by swarms of evil spirits. This latter spectacle attesting to the craftsmanship of the royal hangman, Tristan l'Hermitte, who had nothing to do with the Maison Tristan in the Rue Brienne, named for the first mayor of Tours, for all that it bears a noose on its facade.

**Death of Louis XI**

The story of Louis, Tristan and the rest of the goody crew is admirably told in Scott's "Quentin Durward," which portrays clearly, and in a quick succession of hair-raising episodes, the manner of man that arch rascal was. Louis had the misfortune to die in bed at this same Plessis-Tours in 1483, after urging the group of adherents at his bedside to keep the kingdom at peace for five or six years until the young king, then 13 years of age, had grown a little older.

Four times between the early 11th and early 16th centuries the States General, the nearest approach in France to popular government before the Revolution, met in Tours. The city became the seat of the court in the 15th and 16th centuries, and from that time dates the fame of the Touraine as the chateau regions of France. Amboise, Chenonceaux, Loches, Azay-le-Rideau, Chinon, Ussé and Langeais, to name only a few, are all within easy reach.

Chateau life, however, was not all gardens and wine in the 15th century—when, for instance, in 1429, Jeanne d'Arc marched through Tours on her way to the relief of Orléans. Her standard, which she bore into every battle, and which, a few days later, she was to bear in triumph against the shattered English, had been made in Tours.

**Jeanne's Final Appeal**

The great heroine, quartered in Tours with the rank and privileges of a general, wrote from there to the besieging army of the invader "outside Orléans a final appeal, naming all the leaders of the English force and urging them:

"Give back to the Maid who is here on the part of God the keys of Heaven which you have taken by violence in His France. . . . And you archers, brothers-in-arms, gentles and others who are before the eyes of God, go in peace on the part of God; if you do not so you will soon have news of the Maid who will see you shortly to your great shame."

The threat was made good a few days later.

When Jeanne was taken at Compiègne, and fickle Paris chanted the Te Deum for joy at her fall, it was the Misere that was sung. Tours by the whole populace, marching through the city with lowered heads and bared feet.

Some two centuries later, Louise de la Vallière, first mistress of Louis XIV, was born at 1 Rue du Commerce. She is described as having been "a little dreamy, fair-haired, blue-eyed girl, who loved her royal master with unmistakable sincerity, bore him two children, and when his fondness for her subsided retired to a Carmelite convent, where she spent the remaining 30 years of her life in austere religious devotions." In 1681 she gave way to the willful Madame de Montespan.

**Birthplace of Balzac**

It was at 37 Rue Nationale that Balzac was born in 1799. A tablet set in the upper wall marks the house, which is easier to find, however, by the number than by the tablet. The statue of the great novelist in the Place du Palais de Justice was not put up until 1899.

Tours and the Touraine enter frequently into the writings of the most distinctly local of his works is "Le Curé de Tours," the story of two priests and the machinations of a landlady whose house was so close to the cathedral that one of its buttresses was anchored in her yard.

In 1870, during the siege of Paris, Tours became the seat of the provisional government. To it came Léon Gam-

## HENRY'S PAL TO HENRY

SHOWING THAT WHILE THE ITCH CURE IS GOOD FOR THE SKIN, IT RAISES HOB WITH THE UNIFORM



And Sneaked Out the Back Door

France, Oct. 27, 1918.

Dear pal Henry: Well Henry I bet I got something you ain't got. I got the ich. And if somebody would happen to touch a match to me—noo! Henry I would go up in smoke because I am covered all over with suffer.

I went to the old doc. of our regiment and says I got the measles because that's what I thought myself I had. He kind of looked me over and had kind of a hard look on his face like it was all my fault because I had caught something. I guess he saw I was kind of worried about it or something so he says You got the ich and I'll have to send you back to the advanced hospital where you can be cured.

Well Henry I didn't say much but I thought it would take a month or so anyway. But the doc. says no Henry I will cure me in four days, and of course Henry that wasn't any nice thing to say to a poor old buck priv. who got to be a runner for the co. foot sweat. But four days ain't bad Henry.

Well after that the doc. started in to give me the history of the ich. He says it's a little bug and that there is two bugs which is both a mail and a female. I mean Henry one is a mail and the other is a female. The female is the one that builds dugouts in your skin and which causes the ich.

The old mail is the guy who sort of sponges I guess of the work of the female. He just rambles about over you and pays visits to these different dugouts where the females is and I guess when he wants a good meal he goes into a dugout somewhere on you and has a good feed. I guess maybe he makes love to the female whose dugout he happens to be in and is a kind of a lady killer in other words Henry. I guess I wouldn't mind being one of them bugs myself hey Buddie.

Well Henry there is one old female who ain't going to have any body round making love to her. She come right down my rist and dug in just above my hand and from the way it feels you would think she didn't do nothing but monkey.

But I got her fixed plenty. I got my rist watch on and I got it cinched up so tight that no old bug in this world could crawl under it and the strap is so slick for him to crawl over. She never will know what it is to be married in telling me about a guy who can stay there and pine her little heart out for a mail to come along but I ain't never going to loosen up that rist band a bit.

Well here I am back here at the hospital. When I come in this a.m. a guy started in telling me about a guy who was eat all up by the ich and about another guy who went crazy while he was running round the hospital trying to catch up with his back so he could scratch it.

But it ain't got me scared none Henry. This old suffer would kill most anything. And if it don't kill the bugs they will be so sick they won't be able to dig in anymore.

Well Henry I got to put on some more suffer.

So long Buddie.

S. T. B.

Skratch Hospital, France, Oct. 30, 1918.

Dear Henry: Well Henry this is my fourth day of suffer and tomorrow I get a clean bath and get my clothes all sterilized etc. It will sure be great to be rid of this ich and be all cleaned up with a good bath.

I guess my old ich is all gone or maybe it will be by the time I get all cleaned up. The old lady ich bug on my rist is croaked I guess because her dugout is all caved in and I can't feel her monkeying on me any more.

I don't know whether she died because of the suffer or because she pined her heart away Henry but that ain't none of my affair. She ought to know better than to come down on my rist and hang out a sign that she's home and wants to see company.

Well Henry I been hanging round here looking out of the window for four days and there is a little girl just across the street who has been flirting with me every morning. After I have my bath I am going over and call on her. She is even better looking than the one I had down at Aix.

Well Henry so long

S. T. B.

France, Oct. 31, 1918.

Dear Henry: Well I am back at the outfit but you ought to see me Henry. My uniform looks like a bundle of old

betta, after his flight from Paris by balloon while the Germans still encircled the city. Other balloons did not work so well; one set of dispatches sent up from Paris landed in Norway, and was thence forwarded to Tours. When the French Army of the Loire was overpowered, and Orléans and Le Mans again came into the limelight of history, the government left for Bordeaux.

In the Place des Arts, where the Rue Nationale ends and the stone bridge continues the road across the Loire to St. Symphorien, stands the statues of Rabalais and Descartes, both natives of Touraine, the former having been born at Chinon in 1433 and the latter at La Haye in 1596.

Tours was not, as many reliable historians have made it out to be, the scene of the great victory of Charles Martel over the Arabs in 732. The "battle of Tours" was rather the battle of Poitiers, where another great battle was to be fought seven centuries later. As Poitiers is some 85 kilometers south of Tours, it is doubtful if the Tourangeaux of that day even heard the clash of spears or saw the dust clouds rising from the field that "saved civilization for the world."

## A BUNCH OF THEM AND A WOOD PILE

Forestry Engineers Break a Record and Get a Big Feed

It was Major Sanborn who told us about it. The major is District Commander, Engineers, Forestry, at one of the A.E.F.'s A.P.O.'s. His account of how it happened, in regulation form: To: Subject: style, has this after Subject:

"A bunch of them and a wood pile." Company C, — Engineers, Forestry, concludes the major, "are very anxious to meet any company engaged in this work in the A.E.F. for the champion-ship, or they are willing to match their skill in wood-cutting against any that may be selected in any other company in the A.E.F."

As the Major Tells It

But what, it will be asked, did Company C do? Let the major tell it:

The average cut per man per day in such wood as this company is cutting is three stores (1, e. three cubic meters per day). Of Captain Mosley divided the men he had engaged in wood cutting into four platoons, and offered the winning platoon a dinner, the menu of which is enclosed. (Some dinner—) The contest was to continue over a period of six days. The winning platoon was to be waited upon by members of the losing platoon, who were dressed in yellow slickers and carried axes. In addition to the winning platoon, the captain had at his guests at this dinner the two men who had the highest individual record for the week. There was an average of 101 men engaged in cutting wood for the six days, and the total number of stores cut was 3,824, making an average cut per man per day of 6.22 stores. Before the contest the men had cut on a task basis, each man being required to cut 18 stores per week, which would make for the 101 men 1,818 stores. Therefore, their increase on the contest scheme over the task scheme of production was 110 per cent.

Well they must of sent to Paris or New York for the piece that was broke because it was about noon before they got it started again and then it was about an hour more before the clothes was through being sterilized. The water got cold in the bath tub and I liked to of froze to death, Henry.

Well Henry that wasn't the worst part of it. When I got my clothes and got them all dried out after unwrapping them they looked like a sikline had hit them end ways or something.

My old service stripe and my wound stripe was all turned black Henry and all the buttons looked like they had been through a fire or something and there was a million rinkles in the pants and about two million rinkles in the coat.

Well Henry I put them on and sneaked out the back door. I never went to see that Jane because I didn't want nobody to see me. I got to turn them in for another outfit now.

Well I am back Henry and I guess if I wasn't rite lucky I wouldn't even be here after being nearly froze to death in a bath tub.

So long Henry old Buddie, S. T. B.

P.S. Buck has got the ich too.

## BETWEEN MESSES

Cook: Say, sarge, I hear we won't be able to buy any more eggs over here.

Mess Sergeant (who always bites): Where'd you get that dope?

Cook (dodging behind three field ranges): 'Cause the hens are all laying for the Kaiser.

He: We didn't mind the shelling much, you see, because they were throwing over so many duds.

She: Oh, and do tell me what kind of a noise a dud makes when it goes off!

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What men you will be after the long hard battles, the discipline, the physical training and the confidence of tried and successful courage.

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And in years to come, when your children are asked "What did your papa do in the war?" they can throw out their chests and say "He fought in the front line with the 108th."

You know all this and are proud of the chance you have had, but you are going to realize it more and more and be prouder and prouder all your life. And believe me, you are entitled to all the pride and satisfaction in the world.

I know because I was in a little scrap once.

I salute you!

THE MINUTE MAN OF '76.

## ATROCITY STORIES MUST BE VERIFIED

Censors Ordered to Cut References to Unproved Devilishness

Stories of atrocities committed by German soldiers will have to be true before members of the A.E.F. will be permitted to write about them in their letters home. G.H.Q. Bulletin 80 directs that company and regimental censors cut out such stories from letters unless the recitals of so called facts have previously been officially verified.

In explanation, the bulletin says: Articles have been printed and public speeches made in the United States and elsewhere based on letters written by members of the A.E.F. recounting atrocities falsely alleged to have been committed by the enemy. The effect of such publications has been unfortunate. Relatives of members of the A.E.F. have been unnecessarily frightened by the fear that similar atrocities had happened to their relatives in the service.

Exaggerations and downright falsehoods tend, moreover, to weaken the confidence in the official reports of German atrocities.

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